

Amendments to the Abstract

Please replace the paragraph for the Abstract with the following paragraph.

Method ~~(300)~~ and apparatus for validating application level gateway (ALG)-files or firewall ~~rule sets~~ rule sets. The method and apparatus include receiving, at a bi-directional communications device, an application level gateway file, and comparing at least one compatibility parameter of said ALG file with features of said bi-directional communications device. In an instance where all of the compatibility parameters compare favorably, the ALG file is stored at the bi-directional communications device.